



[Email this article](#)  
[Print this article](#)  
[Most popular pages](#)

[Click to send](#)  
[Choose File Print](#) or [Ctrl P](#) or [Apple P](#)  
[Today](#) | [This Week](#)

## Ahwatukee proves bus rapid transit works

Jul. 29, 2006 12:00 AM

There are those in this sprawling metropolis who believe people will not give up their cars to join mass transit.

We've even heard some of our Southeast Valley elected leaders say that freeways are the only way to handle our growth.

We disagree.

One only has to look as far as the Park-and-Ride lot in Ahwatukee Foothills to realize the truth. People will use mass transit when they have a viable choice.

Bus rapid transit, which uses park-and-ride lots and HOV freeway lanes, is a fast, convenient, comfortable way to travel. The time spent on the road is not wasted but can be spent working, reading, zoning out to music or meditating.

The buses are so jammed leaving Ahwatukee that Phoenix recently added three more runs. On any weekday, the 562 slots in the Park-and-Ride lot at 40th Street and Pecos Road are filled, and overflow cars line the edges of the lot outside of designated spots. There are plans to expand the lot beginning next summer.

Meanwhile, the Park-and-Ride lot in Gilbert sports a good number of empty spaces. It's a perfectly nice lot, in Gilbert's downtown Heritage District. The lot resembles the town's old train depot, and shade trees and covered parking protect cars from the glaring sun.

So, why aren't drivers leaving their cars there? What's different?

Bus rapid transit, that's what.

With quick routes and comfortable buses, it doesn't take long for word to get out in a community and for ridership to rise. The popularity of Ahwatukee's Park-and-Ride is a solid endorsement of the potential of mass transit.

The Legislature this year allocated \$184 million to speed freeway construction in Maricopa County. That's good. But even with that, relief will never get ahead of the growth.

We need to get people out of their cars.

Although there is much buzz about the pros and cons of light rail, we have a proven, efficient and fast people mover already here. Bus rapid transit works because it pulls commuters into a central spot, close to a freeway with an HOV lane that gives the bus quick travel time to another central spot.

When something works so well, why hesitate to expand it? We'd like to see the concept replicated around the Southeast Valley.

We should be running bus rapid transit routes throughout the Southeast Valley, linking the cities with big sister Phoenix.

There are plans included in the Valley Metro Regional Transportation Plan for bus rapid transit routes, but they are years away.

Why not look at accelerating and enhancing those plans, rather than only thinking about freeway lanes?

Some people say drivers won't give up their cars, but Ahwatukee Foothills residents are proving them wrong.

If elected officials cannot be visionaries for better traffic solutions, they should at least get out of the way of the buses.

**Email this article**  
**Print this article**  
**Most popular pages**

**Click to send**  
**Choose File Print or Ctrl P or Apple P**  
**Today | This Week**